



Nanshe (Sumerian: 𒀭𒀪 *NANŠE* (AB×HA)) was a [Mesopotamian goddess](#) in various contexts associated with the sea, marshlands, the animals inhabiting these biomes, namely bird and fish, as well as divination, dream interpretation, justice, social welfare, and certain administrative tasks. She was regarded as a daughter of [Enki](#) and sister of [Ningirsu](#), while her husband was [Nindara](#), who is otherwise little known. Other deities who belonged to her circle included her daughter [Nin-MAR.KI](#), as well as [Hendursaga](#), [Dumuzi-abzu](#) and [Shul-utula](#). In [Ur](#) she was incorporated into the circle of [Ningal](#), while in incantations she appears alongside [Ningirima](#) or [Nammu](#).

The oldest attestations of the worship of Nanshe come from the [Uruk period](#). Her cult center was [Tell Zurghul](#), known in antiquity as [Nina](#). Another place associated with her, [Sirara](#), was likely a sacred district in this city. She was also worshiped elsewhere in the state of [Lagash](#). Sanctuaries dedicated to her existed in its eponymous capital, as well as in [Girsu](#), [Gu'abba](#) and other settlements. She is also attested in a number of other cities in other parts of Mesopotamia, including [Adab](#), [Nippur](#), [Umma](#), [Ur](#) and [Uruk](#), but her importance in their local pantheons was comparatively smaller.

Her [cult](#) declined after the [Ur III period](#). She was later adopted as a dynastic tutelary deity by the kings of the [Sealand](#), and also came to be worshiped in the [Esagil](#) temple complex in [Babylon](#). She was still venerated in the sixth century [BCE](#).

Multiple literary texts focused on Nanshe are known. *Nanshe and the Birds* focuses on her relation with her symbolic animal, the *u₅* bird. Its species is a matter of dispute, with proposed identifications including [goose](#), [swan](#), [cormorant](#), [gull](#) and [pelican](#). In the myth *Enki and Ninhursag*, she appears as one of the deities created by Ninhursag to cure Enki's illness. Other compositions deal with her relation to the sea, fish or dream interpretation.



Nindara (𒀭𒀪𒀭, *Nindar* in sources predating the reign of [Gudea](#)) was a [Mesopotamian god](#) worshiped in the state of [Lagash](#). He was the husband of [Nanshe](#), and it is assumed that his relevance in Mesopotamian religion depended on this connection. His character remains opaque due to his small role in known texts.



Nin-MAR.KI (Ninhursag) was a [Mesopotamian goddess](#). The reading and meaning of her name remain uncertain, though options such as [Ninmar](#) and [Ninmarki](#) can be found in literature. In the past the form [Ninkimar](#) was also in use. She was considered the divine protector of cattle, and additionally functioned as an oath deity. She might have been associated with long distance trade as well. It is possible that in art she was depicted in the company of birds, similar to her mother [Nanshe](#). Other deities associated with her include other members of the pantheon Lagash, such as [Dumuzi-abzu](#) and [Hendursaga](#).

Guabba, a city in the territory of Lagash which functioned as a sea port, was Nin-MAR.KI's main cult center. She was also venerated in other settlements in the same area, such as [Girsu](#). In later periods, she was venerated in Ašdubba, possibly also located in the same area. Attestations from other parts of Mesopotamia are infrequent. After the decline of her cult centers, she is only attested in god lists and laments, such as [Lament for Ur](#).



